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A CONVINCING PROOF OF THE RESURRECTION

"Be not faithless, but believing."--`John 20:27`.

PREVIOUS to the occasion of the words of our text, St. Thomas, the Apostle, had not been present at any of the manifestations of Jesus after His resurrection. He seems to have been of a rather skeptical turn of mind. He heard the other Apostles telling about what they had seen, about the manifestations that had taken place, and he felt that on such evidence he could not believe in the resurrection of Jesus. He thought that his brethren had been too easily deceived.

St. Thomas did not accredit his fellow disciples with an attempt at deceiving him; but as he declared, he would not believe on any such testimony as he had received. He said, "Unless I see the spear mark, unless I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." You cannot convince me that He is not dead. You cannot convince me that a person put to death after that manner is again alive. I cannot say where the deception came from, but you brethren are too easily deceived.

A week later, Jesus appeared in the "upper room" a second time. After saluting the company, He said to St.

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Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing." Again, He said, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." The disciples did not see, evidently, the spirit being. They saw merely a materialization--actual flesh and bones. St. Thomas did as the Lord had requested. Then he said, "My Lord and my God!" He acknowledged that Jesus was the Lord. It was not an apparition. The brethren had not been deceived. He was the one who had come very near being deceived by his own lack of faith.

We cannot doubt that in this incident the Lord has given to all of His followers a very helpful lesson. Had none of the Apostles even seemed to doubt the Lord's resurrection, they might have failed to bring out convincing proof of the fact. They might afterward have thought to themselves, "Why did we not make further investigation?" But here we have evidence of the investigation.

There are some people who are naturally very cautious. St. Thomas seems to have been one of these. We cannot think that the Lord is displeased with such characters. From our standpoint, indeed, the person who is inclined to be somewhat critical is rather to be approved. We would naturally incline to disapprove those who are too easily credulous, too easily persuaded. We are even to think highly of those who are of the mental attitude of St. Thomas. We are glad that there was one such hard thinker as this Apostle.

The Lord said in this connection, "Because thou hast seen, thou hast believed. Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed." There might be a question as to what the Lord meant by these words. He may have meant, Do not congratulate yourself that you were not easy to convince; or He may have meant, There is a special blessing for those who have faith--who believe without seeing.

There were above five hundred brethren amongst the disciples at the time of our Lord's crucifixion. The Apostle says that He was seen of these at one time. (`I Corinthians 15:6`.) But afterwards the brethren were obliged to believe without seeing, merely on the testimony of others. We are in this category ourselves. All the Christian Church throughout the Gospel Age have believed without seeing the outward demonstration. Whether on this account the Lord would be specially pleased with us, we know not. But we think not. Whether we believe on slight evidence or on greater evidence is dependent upon the structure of the brain. God seems to have made provision that all those called of Him may have a sufficiency of evidence. And He gives us the additional evidence from the days of the Apostles to help to sustain our faith. We have the benefit of the doubts of St. Thomas and of our Lord's demonstration of His change of nature.

FAITH THE CENTER OF CHRISTIAN PROGRESS

The question might be asked, Why did Jesus lay stress upon the importance of faith? Why did He imply that St. Thomas could not be His disciple at all without believing? There are many who tell us that they cannot see that faith has any province, that they see no reason why God should bless **faith,** that in their opinion God should reward us for the **doing.** They say, "We are doing all the good works that we can." The Bible always sustains the thought that any one who does not do to the best of his ability shall receive stripes. But the Bible also holds out the other thought--that God purposes to reward His people according to their faith; that whoever cannot exercise perfect faith cannot be His disciple; that if one has not faith, it is impossible for him to get into the Kingdom.

In God's arrangement, faith has been made the very center of Christian progress--faith in the things He **has done,** faith in the things He has **promised**

to do. Faith is the thing which, by God's grace, enables us to avail ourselves

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of the wonderful opportunities of this present time. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." But this does not mean that conditions will always be as now, or that God will forever reject those who, on account of their mental make-up, cannot now exercise faith, but it means that at the present time He will save no others than the faithful.

The Scriptures very clearly indicate, however, that after the selection of the Church, and the reward of their faith, the Lord will then deal with the world through the class which exercise faith now--through Christ and the Church--for the blessing of all mankind. In the next Age less faith will be required than now. Messiah's Kingdom established, will be openly manifested. Then mankind will not be obliged to walk by faith. They will walk by sight, whereas now we must walk by faith and not by sight.

From the natural standpoint it looks as though God were not ruling the world at all, but that the world were being ruled by chance or by Satan himself--so different are conditions from what we would expect if God were recognized as the great King. Consequently we must exercise faith, if we are to receive the blessing at this time. By and by, during the Messianic rule, when everything contrary to righteousness will be punished, and everything in harmony with righteousness will be rewarded, then all opposers of righteousness will be cast down, and all lovers of righteousness will be prosperous. That will be the time of walking by sight.

In the present time we must walk by faith because ours is a special salvation. The "high calling" is a peculiar privilege, for a special class. In the next Age,

however, mankind's unbalance of mind through the fall will be compensated for. Those who need much demonstration will have much; those who need less will have less. The matter will be made so clear that there will be no excuse for any one not to attain to full obedience of works, and these works will gradually lead them up to full human perfection. God has made nothing unreasonable in His laws and requirements, His every demand is reasonable and essential.

OUR LORD'S CHANGE OF NATURE

Putting ourselves into the position of the disciples during the forty days after Jesus had arisen from the dead, we can readily imagine that they were considerably confused. One and another of them had been witnesses of strange things--they could not explain what, but they had seen what purported to be Jesus--on one occasion the appearance was as the gardener, on another occasion as a stranger, etc. They saw no mark of identity, and did not really know whether they had seen Him at all. On another occasion, looking very much like His former self, He appeared in their midst, the doors being shut. They could not imagine how a human being could have come in while the doors were shut. Therefore there was considerable perplexity.

The Scriptures give us to understand that the reason why our Lord thus manifested Himself in various forms was that God raised Jesus from the dead to a different plane of existence--as a spirit being. The Scriptures declare, "Now the Lord is that Spirit." (`2 Corinthians 3:17`.) The Second Adam is the Heavenly Lord. He is not the earthly man Jesus. This explanation we can appreciate because we are living since Pentecost. We can see and understand that Jesus had become a spirit being, and that like the angels he could, where it was necessary, appear like a human being. We would not question at all that if Jesus had any reason for showing the identical body that had been crucified He could have appeared in it, could have opened the door and the Apostles could

have been blinded, so that they could not see the door opening and shutting, as He entered. But the account contradicts such supposition and is very explicit in the statement that "the doors were **shut,"** not that the Apostles did not **see** them open, but that they **did not open** at all. In the second statement--when St. Thomas was present-- our Lord appeared in the same manner, "The doors being **shut."**--`John 20:19,26`.

While Jesus could have brought the body, and could have maintained Himself inside of it as a spirit being, He did not do so. If He had done this they would have been deceived, supposing that He had arisen in His body of flesh in which He had been crucified. Therefore He appeared in **different** bodies of flesh, but under conditions that left no doubt as to His identity. He knew that after the disciples had received the Holy Spirit all would be plain to them. So He made no attempt to explain to them at that time, but merely kept them in touch with Himself until after the Pentecostal blessings had come, when they were able to understand from the true viewpoint.

Our thought, therefore, would be that the body in which our Lord appeared was materialized. This was not a deception. It was intended, on the contrary, to keep the disciples from being deceived. Being natural men, they could not appreciate a change from human nature to spirit nature. Therefore this appearance was to help them over a difficulty--to keep them from saying "He is not risen."

RESURRECTION MUCH MISUNDERSTOOD

The disciples could see that our Lord had a different power altogether from what He had before He died. Thus He appeared time and again during the forty days --a few minutes at a time. This very evidently was to accomplish the purpose of demonstrating to them that He was a spirit being, that He had power

to come and go like the wind, that He could appear in the flesh when necessary, and then vanish at will, and that He could come in one form and another form. This was the great lesson by which He purposed to keep them from being in any way deceived.

We cannot imagine how Jesus could have substantiated His resurrection and confirmed the faith of His disciples in any better way. If He had remained with them as a man, they would have felt bound to believe that the same

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personality, the same flesh, was His still, and they would have been unable to understand His words, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the Age." But now they could understand that as He had appeared and vanished from sight, although really present with them throughout the forty days, He could also in a different sense, be with them all through the Gospel Age, and return in person when necessary, in the end of the Age.

We see no deception in this, but an avoidance of deception. We are to remember that it took several of these manifestations to attest the fact that He was a changed being. If the disciples had thought of Him as a Man in Heaven, it would have led them into serious difficulty, just as we see is now the case with our friends in the nominal Churches, who think Jesus arose in the same flesh, and that He retains that flesh in Heaven. As the hymn says,
"Five bleeding wounds He bears,
Received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers,
They strongly plead for me."

Our friends believe this. We ask them if they think that as Jesus bears the

marks, the scars, of His wounded flesh, that all of His followers will likewise bear theirs.

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They answer, Yes. Then we remind them that some of them were most horribly maltreated, often mutilated, before they died. Think of those who were beheaded; and those who met with accidents and wounds! If they are to bear those marks and bruises in Heaven, or be headless, they will be a disfigured set.

We show them that those who hold this view do not believe at all in the Redemption--the Redemption of which the Bible treats. We quote to our friends, "He poured out His soul unto death;" He made "His soul an offering for sin." Yes, they answer, we believe that His fleshly body was sacrificed. We reply, His fleshly body will only redeem the fleshly body of Adam. But Adam had more than the fleshly body. It was the **soul** of Adam that sinned --and Jesus must have given a **soul** in order to redeem Adam.--`Isaiah 53:10,12`.

If the body never was a **part of Jesus,** then it was not **Jesus** that died, but His **body;** it was not **He** that was humiliated, but His **body;** it was not He who left His glory that was sacrificed, but His **body.** Now, if the body never was Jesus, then He deceived mankind into thinking that He was a man; and He deceived the Apostle into saying that "He who was rich, for our sakes became poor." (`2 Corinthians 8:9`.) Then to speak of His being tempted, as the Apostle Paul spoke of Him, was wrong, for He could not be tempted like us, if He were altogether of a different nature. So we see that the Truth, as the Bible teaches it, is harmonious.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE WORLD

The First Resurrection, Christ's Resurrection, began with the glorious change of our Lord, more than eighteen centuries ago, and as **His** Resurrection, it will be completed when the last member of His Body shall have experienced the change from earthly to Heavenly, Divine nature. The world's resurrection cannot take place before that of the Church, but must follow it. The Ancient Worthies will be the first of the earthly class to be resurrected to human nature. But their resurrection will not be at the same time as that of the Church, but **later**--as the Apostle says, "They, without us, shall not be made perfect."--`Hebrews 11:39,40`.

The awakening of the world will probably not begin for fifty or a hundred years after the Kingdom has been established. During that time, however, the resurrection process--the raising up gradually--will be in operation amongst the nations then living. As gradually nations, peoples, kindreds and tongues are awakened, they must be brought to a knowledge of the Truth, and must give the assent of their wills, before any resurrection processes begin to operate in them. This work will continue all down through the thousand years of Messiah's Reign.

The world's resurrection will not be fully completed until the end of the thousand years, while the Church's resurrection will be completed at the beginning of the thousand years. For this reason it would be improper to say that the resurrections of the just and of the unjust take place at the same time. Indeed, the world will not be raised up fully until, at the close of the thousand years, they shall be turned over to God, even the Father; for one result of the fall was the loss of the Heavenly Father's favor and fellowship. Mankind will not be delivered out of that feature of the fall until the Mediator shall have accomplished His work in them.

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THE MANNER OF MOTHER EVE'S TEMPTATION

"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden?"--`Genesis 3:1`.

THE SCRIPTURAL teaching that God knows no sin, signifies that He practises no sin. He commits no sin, connives at no sin. He is not an assistant to sin. He cannot look upon sin with any degree of allowance. He shows no favor, no light of His countenance, no light of His eye, on anything that is sinful. On the contrary, He would turn His back upon these things. He would not have the slightest sympathy with anything sinful.

If, therefore, man were sinful in the largest possible degree, God would have no sympathy with him. The Scriptures present the thought that man is not thus sinful in the highest degree, but that he is sinful on account of weaknesses; that these weaknesses had their start, or beginning, away back in the disobedience of Father Adam; and that Father Adam's death penalty came upon him as the result of his disobedience, as recorded in Genesis. Because man is thus a sinner by nature rather than by will, therefore God has purposed to redeem him from the curse and to give him full reconciliation with Himself by the Restitution to be accomplished by our Lord Jesus under the Messianic Kingdom.

Such as will not conform to the laws and regulations of that Kingdom will be accounted as **wilful** sinners. God will not look upon them with any degree of allowance. He will take from them every right and privilege. They will be

destroyed. As it is written, "All the wicked will He [God] destroy," in the Second Death.--`Psalms 145:20`.

DECEPTION THROUGH MENTAL SUGGESTION

There is intelligent sin. Those who **know** right and **do** wrong are wilful sinners. The great wilful sinner, according to the Scriptures, is Satan. He was a murderer from the beginning, we read, and abode not in the Truth. (`John 8:44`.) He murdered our race by his deception. He did not tell the truth, but he misrepresented it. He told Mother Eve that she would **not** die, if she ate of the forbidden fruit; and that she would have wisdom and knowledge such as she craved. We are not to understand that Satan did this in a direct way, but through the serpent.

According to the Scriptures, the serpent at that time did not creep, but was next in intelligence to our first parents. Satan used this serpent to counsel Eve to disobey the Creator. Eve should have said, "Who is this that teaches me to disobey the Great Creator who made man?" The temptation came, however, in a very deceptive manner. The serpent spake not by words, but, apparently, by actions. It went continually to the tree of whose fruit Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat, and ate of the fruit.

Mother Eve saw that the serpent ate of the fruit and that it was the wisest of all cattle. Then the thought occurred to her that the reason why the serpent was the wisest of all cattle was because it ate of the tree, the forbidden fruit. Next the thought came that the reason why they were not to eat of the fruit of the tree was that they might be kept from being as intelligent as they might otherwise be. Lastly, the thought was suggested, If you eat of the fruit of that tree, the influence of that fruit upon you will make you as God Himself. You will know everything. So it was this indirect teaching under the obsession of the serpent

by Satan that constituted the serious deception which came to Eve.

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DEGRADATION OF THE SERPENT NOT AN INJUSTICE

It might be argued that Mother Eve did not sin. She **did** sin. She knew that she had no right to violate the command which she had received. Every one who does wrong knowingly commits sin. We might just as well excuse the man who steals a thousand dollars. He knows at the time that he is stealing a thousand dollars. Whether he is ever caught or not, the wrong has been committed.

In other words, the wrong starts with the heart, with a willingness or intention to do wrong. Such a one is a sinner--a transgressor of the Law. So Mother Eve was a transgressor of the Law, and in that sense she was amenable to the penalty. The serpent was not, however, a moral being, that he should receive a special punishment as a criminal. The criminal was **Satan,** who will one day be destroyed, as will also all those who have his spirit, his disposition.

There was a certain penalty, however, meted out upon the serpent--not for its punishment, for it had done nothing contrary to its nature, but to make the serpent a synonym of Sin, because it was the tool of Sin. The serpent became the symbol of Satan and of Sin. When

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the children of Israel were disobedient in the wilderness, God permitted them to be bitten by fiery serpents. He instructed Moses to raise up a brazen serpent upon a pole, that whoever looked upon it might live. (`Numbers 21:6-9`.) Our Lord said that "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must

the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (`John 3:14,15`.) Even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness for the healing of the people, so all may be healed by looking to our Lord for the help necessary.

There was no injustice done to the serpent, when God said, "On thy belly shalt thou go." God has made no covenant with any one except His intelligent creatures. So if an ox were degraded to the condition of a bullfrog, there would be no violation of justice. The serpent and other beasts have life as an unmerited favor from the great Creator. No creature would have the least right to question whatever privileges or blessings would come to him. To simply degrade the beast from one form of life to another form of life was no injustice. It is, however, a lesson in humility, which has been profitable, more or less, all through the six thousand years of man's history, and will be profitable all through Messiah's coming glorious reign of righteousness.

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STORMS ON THE SEA OF LIFE

"He maketh the storm a calm."--`Psalm 107:29`.

IF THERE is anything in the world which causes a man to feel his own littleness it is a storm at sea. The voyagers realize that no human arm could calm that storm. The text, then, refers to the Almighty One, our Heavenly Father. Our Heavenly Father, however, always uses instrumentalities. The Scriptures tell us that after He had created one great being, He rested. This One was the Logos, the Only Begotten of the Father, the First-born of all creation.

(`Colossians 1:15`; `Revelation 3:14`.) All the power the Father has since exercised has been through the Lord Jesus.

The passage of Scripture used as our text may not have been understood fully and completely by the Psalmist, the one who uttered this prophecy. Like many other Scriptures it has a special application to the Church of Christ. The Apostle Paul tells us that these things were written beforehand for our admonition, instruction. (`I Corinthians 10:11`.) We believe that nearly all the prophecies recognize the Lord and His Body first. There have been many storms permitted by the Lord to come upon the little company of His followers. Sometimes the whole journey of life has been a stormy one. We sometimes sing, "When the storms of life are raging." In his Epistles, the Apostle intimates that those who do not have storms, trials and difficulties lack proof that they are God's children; for God would not be dealing with such as His children.--`Hebrews 12:7,8`.

If we are children of God, we need to have trials and testings, that these may make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. (`Colossians 1:12`.) In all these experiences, the tendency of the trial is to drive us nearer to the Lord, to make us feel that we need the Divine shelter and care. And so a blessing comes out of these storms. We are not to think of God as making these storms, either literal or figurative. Satan is the great Enemy. While literal storms come about by natural laws, apparently, yet there may be a power exercised by spirit beings to produce them. During our Lord's ministry a storm of this kind was raised on the Sea of Galilee. The storm was so sudden and so great that, although the lake is not very large, the boat seemed in danger of going down, and the disciples, although experienced fishermen, were in terror. Jesus was asleep in the end of the boat. They came to Him and said, "Master! carest Thou not that we perish?"

STORMS A TEST OF FAITH

Satan knew that Jesus and the disciples were in the boat on the sea. Perhaps he thought that by causing this storm he could destroy Jesus and thwart the Father's Plan. Jesus rebuked the storm. This He would not have done, we suppose, if it had been caused by the Father. Then He applied the lesson to the disciples, saying, "O ye of little faith, why did ye doubt?"

The Lord's evident intention in letting the storm go as far as it did was to test the faith of the disciples, and to give a lesson such as this text is giving us now. It would cause them to remember in future years, in all their difficulties, whether from their own imperfections, or the imperfections of others, or as the result of the work of fallen angels, that all things were under Divine oversight. This also we should remember: We have the assurance that all these things will work for good to us, and that He will with the temptation provide also a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it.--`I Cor. 10:13`.

This was illustrated in the storm on the sea, and the Lord's act in rebuking the storm. So if we have trials and difficulties, we should cry unto the Lord--we should exercise faith enough to cry unto Him. It should not be that blind faith which would say, "Whatever the fates have ordained, that is my portion; and there is no escape." This latter is the condition of the heathen, but is not the case with us. The Lord allows the storms to press us more and more so that we will cry unto Him. Then He will hear us and give us the necessary deliverance. He may not always make it a very speedy deliverance, but He will make a way for us to escape. We must remember also that it is the New Creature with which He is dealing. These storms may be right **inside,** in our own person--

storms of passion, of anger, of resentment. These we are not to allow to go on; but we are to cry for the Lord's help, that we may be overcomers of these storms--trials.

GREAT STORM OF WRATH COMING

This incident of the Sea of Galilee pictures what the Lord is doing for the Church now, and what He will do in the future for the world. He intends to deliver the whole world from sin and death, which have had a long reign of six thousand years. This period has been one continuous storm, with occasional brief lulls. Meantime the world is receiving certain great lessons as to the desirability of harmony with God. By and by they will come to understand, and will then greatly appreciate the importance of being fully in accord with God and very obedient to the Divine direction. Thus a foundation stone is being laid in their education for the next Age.

Finally, this storm on Galilee seems to picture very graphically the great time of trouble with which this Age will end. Then the reign of Satan will cease, and the reign of Messiah will begin. We are not to think of Jesus' Kingdom as bringing about the great time of trouble. The Scriptural thought seems rather to be that Christ's work in the present time is with the Church, and that with the completion of the Church, with the glorification of the Church, Christ's Kingdom will be set up. This Day of Trouble will be more particularly the Day of Jehovah. In this, Divine Justice will have a hand.

We do not mean, however, to exclude the Lord Jesus, for He is the chief factor in all that God does. But when the Kingdom of Messiah comes, it will exercise a restraining power--will bring down the lofty, will turn the wrath of man so as to cause it to praise God. This wrath of man will bring "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." In some of the Scriptural pictures it is

represented as a whirlwind, and in others it is represented as a great tidal wave--the sea and the waves will roar. Then in the midst of a great storm, which will be sufficient to wreck the whole human fabric, Messiah's Kingdom will be set up. It will cause wars to cease. Satan will be bound. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God will fill the whole earth. "The desire of all nations shall come," and will be recognized in the making of the storm a calm, by this Kingdom of Messiah.

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LEGAL AND ACTUAL CANCELLATION OF SIN

BECAUSE the entire race of Adam was in him when he was sentenced, it was condemned with him; and during the six thousand years since, it has been unable, on account of weakness, frailty, sin, to extricate itself from this Divine condemnation. God has provided the Redeemer for the very purpose of lifting the death-penalty upon mankind because of the disobedience of Adam, in order that as **condemnation** has passed upon all because of the **disobedience** of **one,** so **justification to life,** through the **obedience** of **one,** might pass upon all.--`Romans 5:18,19`.

More than eighteen hundred years ago our Lord laid down the Ransom-price for man's life. During the interim, the Church has been called from amongst mankind and permitted to become sharers with Him in His sacrificial death, that they might afterwards share in His glory. When the last member shall have passed beyond the veil, and the great High Priest shall have been completed--Jesus the Head and the Church His Body--then Christ will present His merit for the sins of the whole world. Divine Justice will accept this merit. With this

acceptance, the sins of the whole world will be canceled in

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a legal sense, just as those of the Church are now. When we come into the Divinely appointed relationship with the Lord, there is no condemnation to us who are thus in Christ Jesus.--`Romans 8:1`.

At the end of the Gospel Age, when the Ransom-price shall have been applied for the world, and shall have been accepted by the Father, the whole world will be placed in the hands of Jesus Christ. Then, through The Christ as the Mediator, the New Covenant will go into operation, the terms and conditions of which will be open to all mankind--for it will contain blessings for all.

Nevertheless, there will be something for men to do in order to avail themselves of the blessings of this Covenant. As it is God's part to make such a Covenant, so during the thousand years of Christ's reign it will be the part of humanity to accept the terms and come into harmony with God through its requirements. Gradually mankind will come up, all who will, to the standard of everlasting life, but those who refuse to respond will die the Second Death.

From this point of view, we see that it will require the entire thousand years of Christ's reign to accomplish fully the work of the antitypical Atonement Day--making all mankind at-one with God. The work of At-one-ment includes the satisfaction of Justice, not only at the beginning of the Millennial Age, but throughout the Millennium. This is shown in the type of the inauguration of the Law Covenant. Moses sprinkled the blood first upon the tables of the Law, and then upon all the people. As the work of sprinkling the people was a task that undoubtedly took a long time to accomplish, so the antitypical sprinkling of mankind will require many years.

A COMING SETTLEMENT FOR SIN

The answer to the question, Will mankind come forth from the tomb free from condemnation? depends largely upon the point of view. They will come forth free from Divine condemnation, for all of the condemnation which came upon them through heredity will have been satisfied by the Ransom-price paid by Christ for Adam and all of his race. And for other sins than those of heredity there will have been a settlement--at the end of the Gospel Age. The Scriptures indicate that of this present generation God will require all the righteous blood shed from the time of Abel down to the present. Hence for wilful sin there will be satisfaction rendered through a great time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time.--`Daniel 12:1`; `Matthew 24:21`.

A type of this trouble is seen in that which came upon the Jewish nation at the end of the Jewish Age. (`Matthew 23:34-36`.) In the Revelation, we find an illustration of this coming satisfaction, for injustice perpetrated. We read, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." (`Revelation 6:10,11`.) That Day of Vengeance is about at the door of Christendom.

From all this it is evident that Divine Justice does not intend to terminate fully the adjustment of accounts until there is a full ledger of Justice, so to speak. From that

time forward, each one will be responsible for the weaknesses and blemishes of his own conduct.--`Jer. 31:29,30`.

RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY

Mankind will not be accountable for the violation of a perfect standard, but each will be held responsible in proportion to his own knowledge and ability. During the Millennium, the rule will be such as would now be considered just in a well regulated family. The stronger child is given the heavier burden to carry. So it will be during the coming Age. Each one will be accountable for what he can bear. He will not be held responsible for perfection and condemned for inability to reach it, but will be judged according to his ability.

During the thousand years, each individual will make progress to the extent that he shall endeavor to comply with the regulations of the Kingdom. But before he can do this, he must enter into the New Covenant and formally purpose to be one who will come into line with the requirements of the great King and His Assistants. If he fails to do this, he will be considered an outlaw, and at a hundred years old he will be destroyed as a sinner. (`Isaiah 65:20`.) The **weaknesses** upon him will not be regarded as **sin,** except as all imperfection is sin. But no one will be held responsible for more than he is able to do, nor will he be condemned for what he is not able to perform.

Under the Millennial Kingdom, mankind will be dealt with, not individually, as with the Church of this Age, but collectively, as with the Jewish nation. Individual relationship with the Father will not be possible until the end of the thousand years--until Messiah shall have put down all imperfection and shall have lifted mankind up out of sin and death conditions into perfection as human beings. Then He will deliver the Kingdom over to the Father, and will no longer stand between humanity and Divine Justice. --`I Corinthians 15:24`.

The Scriptures show, however, that before the Heavenly Father will receive the restored race of mankind, He will give them a very crucial test by permitting some wonderfully deceiving influence to go abroad in the world. This influence proceeds from "the dragon, that old serpent, which is called the Devil and Satan." By that time every one will know right from wrong. The test, therefore, will be to determine whether those who know right will practise wrong. Consequently the Lord will prove them, as He did Father Adam and Mother Eve, to demonstrate whether they are as loyal to Him as they should be.--`Revelation 20:7-10`.

Those who fail in any of the tests of obedience will be judged unworthy of everlasting life, and will be destroyed. Those who prove themselves worthy of everlasting life will receive it. Of that time the Apostle Paul says, "The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (`Romans 8:21`.) All the members of the groaning race of mankind, who will be obedient, will be delivered from sin and death conditions into the full liberty of the sons of God--such as Adam enjoyed before his fall. They will have the knowledge which he lacked, and will pass the test which he failed to pass.

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ALL THINGS WORK FOR GOOD TO THEM

--JUNE 15.--`GENESIS 46:28-34`; `47:12,28-31`.--

"To them that love God all things work together for good."--`Romans

8:28`.

SO JACOB and all his family left the land of Canaan, the Land of Promise, Palestine; and, at the invitation of Pharaoh through Joseph, they located in the land of Goshen, suitable to their business which was that of herdsmen and shepherds. Joseph went in his chariot to Goshen, and there met his father Jacob, whom he had not seen for many years. After the custom of oriental countries, they kissed each other, and Joseph wept. Then came the official presentation of Jacob and his family to Pharaoh. Joseph was careful that they should make no mistake. He therefore let the king clearly know that their occupation was that of shepherds and herdsmen; for the Egyptians despised that business, and hence would keep themselves separate from the Hebrews. Thus the land of Goshen became almost like a separate country from Egypt.

Jacob at this time was one hundred thirty years old, and quite feeble. Brought into the presence of Pharaoh, Jacob blessed him--in the sense of asking the Divine blessing upon him, we may assume. Thus the family of Jacob, now called by their new name, Israel, became firmly established in the land of Egypt. Jacob lived seventeen years thereafter, during which Joseph and his people, the Israelites, were in favor with Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

Our lesson relates especially to God's willingness and ability to make all the experiences of His people to work out for their good. This naturally suggests that we inquire in what way Jacob's life experiences were to his welfare. The Scriptures declare, "Jacob have I loved; Esau have I hated [loved less]." God's Love should be distinctly seen manifested in some way in making matters work for good to Jacob and his family. The question is, How? Can we see the lines along which Divine favor operated for the welfare of Jacob and his family?

Only with the eye of faith, guided by the words of Jesus, His Apostles and the Prophets, can we see how God's blessing was with Israel and gave them blessings more than others. Many have not this eye of faith. Hence only the few can see, appreciate, understand, this matter. The majority both of professing Christians and of Jews fail to see what blessing came to Israel. Proportionately such are weak in faith, and quite ready to be turned aside by Higher Critics and Evolutionists into total unbelief in the Bible and the Divine Plan of the Ages which it sets forth.

Jacob, having become the heir of the great Promise made to Abraham (in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed), straightway seems to have gotten into trouble. He fled from home, leaving everything to his brother. He served his uncle Laban for seven years, that he might have Rachel for his wife, but Divine Providence permitted him to be cheated, and he was obliged to serve seven years more for her. Time and again his uncle Laban changed his wages in an endeavor to get the best of him. Thus Jacob was thrown into competition with his uncle in the endeavor to protect his own interests.

Finally, with the fruit of many years' toil, he returned to Canaan, fearful, however, of his brother Esau, whom he placated with a rich present. Later, he lost his wife and was bereft of Joseph, his beloved son. Then came the famine, the recovery of Joseph and the incidents of our recent lesson. Later on, that very move into Egypt appeared to have been a disastrous one, for the Egyptians

enslaved the Israelites. Finally, they were delivered, only to have trying experiences in the wilderness of Paran for forty years, before entering Canaan proper.

HOW DID GOD BLESS ISRAEL?

Then it was a gradual matter to get possession of the land. They had various trials and difficulties, captivities to the Philistines, the Syrians, etc. Later on, they had kings, and then a rebellion, or division of the Kingdom, followed by more wars, famines, pestilences, until they were all carried captive into Babylon. They went away numerous, they returned a comparatively small company. Then they had more trials, wars, etc.

By and by, Jesus came, and was repudiated by all except the few. Then the nation was repudiated by God. "Your house is left unto you desolate." Gradually trouble and anarchy came upon them, until as a nation they went to Hades--nationally they fell asleep. They have been asleep for more than eighteen centuries, while personally they have endured persecutions in many nations.

What we want to see is how God's blessing was identified with all those experiences of Israel. We want to know in what way God overruled for their good and blessing more than in the affairs of other nations. To understand this, we must take a glance at other nations and peoples and their experiences and then must look also into the future.

Where is Egypt--where is the government of the Pharaohs today? Where is Assyria--where are their peoples today? Where are the Philistines? Where are any and all of the nations who flourished in the days of Israel? The answer is that they are no more. They have merged with other peoples or have been blotted out by natural processes. They could not be restored today, because none of those peoples remain anywhere. We are not discussing the numerous tribes of India, nor the consolidated bands of China and Japan, nor the

barbarous tribes of Africa. These all have been outside the line of our history, because not closely identified with the nation of Israel, Natural or Spiritual.

But Israel exists today, even though the nation is asleep in Hades, Sheol, waiting for a national awakening and resurrection. That awakening is already arousing "dry bones" from despair, and pointing forward to a future day of blessing and prosperity. One result of God's providential care over Israel has been that as a people they have been maintained in existence. It is this hope of future blessings, based upon God's promise to Abraham, which continues to vitalize that people. It is this hope which by and by, according to prophecy, will re-vitalize Israel, and again bring her forward and identify her with the great Messianic Kingdom, which will bless the world.

But some one may say, Tell us not about national blessings, for we shall have to think of the whole world from the standpoint of one human brotherhood. If Israel has been blessed of God, there should be some personal blessing manifest and not merely a national prolongation of grace, in their life as a people.

Very true, we answer. There are both personal and national blessings of the past and for the future. God's dealings with Israel in the past did not indeed prove all of that nation to be holy, saintly, and worthy of the highest honor and stations in the Divine Program. But those providences served to select in that nation a peculiar people, of similar characteristics to those possessed by Abraham; viz., faith and obedience. Following Abraham came Isaac; following Isaac came Jacob; and following Jacob came the nation of Israel amongst whom there were a few, from time to time, worthy of being ranked with their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The trying experiences of centuries of national life tended to develop noble

characters, strong in faith and loyal to the core. St. Paul enumerates some of these besides Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the Prophets. He includes with them all those "Israelites indeed" who were loyal to God to the extent of suffering persecutions for righteousness' sake and for the sake of the hopes which they received through that Abrahamic Promise. Some of these, he says, were "stoned to death, some were sawn asunder....of whom the world was not worthy."

This selecting process continued down to the time of Jesus, and found a glorious company, even if it were not a numerous one. God was seeking such people, and He found the ones whom He sought. True, they have not yet received their reward. True, their reward is not be a Heavenly one, but an earthly one as was promised them. "All the land that thou seest will I give to thee, and to thy seed after thee."

These faithful ones of Israel are the ones for whom all things have been working together favorably--because they loved God, because they were responsive to the righteousness which He set before them and to the great Promise which He gave them. The time is near at hand, we believe, when these will constitute Messiah's earthly representatives in the ruling and blessing of the world of mankind.

What was prophesied of them before will be fulfilled. Instead of being the fathers, they will be Messiah's children, receiving everlasting life from Him as a Father. He will make them princes in all the earth, in subordinate co-operation with His Heavenly Empire. (`Psalm 45:16`.) Thus we see that all the trials and difficulties of Israel were, under Divine Providence, working together for good to that special class, "Israelites indeed, in whom was no guile," and who loved God supremely. And their reward is nigh at hand. Through them, the blessing will extend to every nation of earth.

SPIRITUAL ISRAEL'S EXPERIENCES

When God's time came, at the First Advent, to call out from the world a special class of Spiritual Israelites, He gave the first opportunity to the children of Jacob. As many of them at that time as were "Israelites indeed, in whom was no guile," were privileged to have special opportunities and instructions from Jesus. All of that true, loyal class were enabled by special providential guidance and instruction, to recognize Him as the Messiah, while all others were blinded by prejudice, superstition and obscure statements.

This was another advantage that came to the natural seed of Abraham--that they should have the first opportunity of becoming members of Spiritual Israel, of which they had previously had no information whatever. Nor have they yet learned that The Messiah for whom they were waiting is to be a Spiritual Messiah, instead of a fleshly one, and that He is to be a composite Messiah, instead of a single person--that He is to be composed of many members.

Thus the natural children of Abraham had "much advantage every way, chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God," and because having those oracles, those prophecies, they had the best opportunity of all people of knowing respecting Messiah and of coming into harmony with Him, becoming His disciples.

But as was said of Natural Israel, so with still greater emphasis it might be said of Spiritual Israel, that their privileges brought to them special sufferings and persecutions. Jesus was buffeted, all manner of evil was said against Him falsely, and He was finally crucified as a criminal, because He averred that He was the Son of

God, and did not deny that He was the One who ultimately would be the King of Glory.

Then for centuries the faithful followers of Jesus had bitter experiences. Sometimes they were literally tortured, literally persecuted, literally flayed alive. At other times they suffered symbolical persecution, symbolical flaying alive, and had all manner of evil spoken against them falsely for Christ's sake. Deceptions, false doctrines, and antitypical carrying into symbolical Babylon--all these have been experiences of the people of God. Nor does this close the list; for St. Paul declared, "Whosoever will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." So whoever today belongs to the Lord has the assurance that if he is faithful to his Master, he will have the opposition of Satan, of the world and of his own flesh.

The questions arise, How are these things working better for us than for the world? Do not Christians die the same as unbelievers, the same as Jews, the same as Mohammedans, the same as the heathen? Do they not have their share of sickness, sorrow, and pain in connection with their dying experiences? Surely none can dispute the truthfulness of this suggestion! Wherein then, shall we say, is there an advantage in being a Spiritual Israelite? If all the world is redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, if all the world is to have a blessing under Messiah's glorious reign of a thousand years, and if the Ancient Worthies are to have the first place in the Kingdom that will then be established under the whole heavens, what will be the advantage, if any, to those who have been faithful and loyal Spiritual Israelites--to those who have endured hardness as good soldiers and have sought to lay down their lives in the Master's service, in the service of the brethren, in the service of the Truth, in the service of God?

MUCH ADVANTAGE EVERY WAY IS OURS

The advantages of this class are numerous, and lay hold upon the present life, as well as that which is to come. In the present time, it is the privilege of these to enjoy the peace of God, which passeth all human understanding. It is their privilege to know by faith that all things are working together for good to them because they love God. It is their privilege to realize that whatever may happen to others in the world, nothing can **happen,** so far as they are concerned. Their affairs and interests are all subject to a Divine supervision. No wonder they can have peace in every storm! No wonder they are able to rejoice even in tribulation!

Theirs is a joy of spirit, of which no earthly experience can rob them, and their joys increase daily, yearly, as they ripen in Christian experience, and as they grow in knowledge and in grace. Theirs is a privilege of access to the Throne of Heavenly Grace, and a privilege of communion with the Heavenly Father and with their Lord Jesus Christ. They may count themselves, as St. Peter declares, members of the Royal Priesthood, the Holy Nation of Israel, the Peculiar People of God. They may rejoice in the privilege of being God's ambassadors, and of telling the Good Tidings to others, thus to "show forth the praises of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light." Oh, great are the privileges and mercies and blessing of these Spiritual Israelites, far more than compensating for their disciplines, tribulations and oppositions!

JOYS OF THE LIFE TO COME

But beyond all these experiences of the present life lie the riches of God's grace for the future, which these possess and hold with the power of faith. As St.

Paul declares, they have the "promise of the life which now is and also of that which is to come." And that life to come is such a wonderful life that the study of it is an endless matter. Every step of obedience brings them rights and privileges with God, brings them a step forward also in knowledge of Himself and of His glorious Plan. Thus the more saintly and self-sacrificing the character, the deeper may be his knowledge, the richer his experiences, the more precious his hopes and anticipations.

Are we asked, What are the anticipations of this class? The answer is, They anticipate the things which God has promised; they anticipate that as they are now children of God, so their promised resurrection from the dead to full spiritual perfection will make them sons of God on the highest plane. And if children, then they will be "heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, their Lord." Besides, these Spiritual Israelites are heirs of a Spiritual Canaan, a Spiritual Kingdom. To enter upon their Kingdom they must needs experience the powers of a better resurrection than others. And this will mean, the Apostle assures us, that they will "be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." Is it not true then, in the fullest and most absolute sense, that all things are working together for good to those who love God, to the called ones according to His purpose, not only to those who were called during the Jewish Age, but also to those who have been called and who have accepted the call during this Gospel Age!

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REPORTS OF MEMORIAL CELEBRATIONS

The annual reports of the numbers participating in the Memorial Supper constitute one of our best means of knowing approximately the number of fully consecrated Christians interested in what is styled Present Truth. For this reason we have specially requested that reports be sent to us as promptly as possible after the celebration each year. For some reason we are continually disappointed. Evidently many of the Classes do not elect scribes or secretaries, or else those elected are not suitable persons or slack in the Lord's business. We have waited the press in order to print a satisfactory report. Ten days have passed since the Memorial, and only a small fraction of the Classes have reported. For instance, there are over eleven hundred Classes in the U.S. and Canada, but we have heard from only two hundred and sixty-five of them, representing 7,944 commemorators. The following statement shows only those cities reporting fifty or more participants. The Brooklyn report for this year is smaller than a year ago, not because of less interest, but because some of the outside Classes have grown to an extent that justifies holding separate Memorials more convenient for some of the more feeble members. The same applies to Pittsburgh, Pa.

Brooklyn, N.Y..... 815 Allentown, Pa..... 73 Boston, Mass..... 360 Binghamton, Pa..... 72 Pittsburgh, Pa..... 350 Toledo, O..... 71 Los Angeles, Cal..... 310 Worcester, Mass..... 71 Cleveland, O..... 189 Spokane, Wash..... 70 Seattle, Wash..... 164 Cincinnati, O..... 70 Washington, D.C..... 160 Jacksonville, Fla..... 58 Minneapolis and St. Paul.. 160 Newark, N.J..... 57 Detroit, Mich..... 149 San Francisco, Cal..... 56 Indianapolis, Ind..... 129 Springfield, Mass..... 55 St. Louis, Mo..... 124 Pasadena, Cal..... 50 San Antonio, Texas..... 119 Altoona, Pa..... 50 Portland, Ore..... 112 London, Eng., Tabernacle.. 525 Columbus, O..... 98 " " Forest Gate.. 313 Buffalo, N.Y..... 97 Bristol, Eng..... 95 Lancaster, Pa..... 87 Oldham, Eng..... 87 Denver, Colo..... 85 Sheffield, Eng..... 73

Houston, Texas..... 80 Birmingham, Eng..... 56 Richmond, Va..... 79 Glasgow, Scotland..... 428 Lynn, Mass..... 78 Eleven Classes S. India... 455

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WOES ANCIENT AND MODERN

--JUNE 22.--`AMOS 6:1-8`.--

"Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live."--`Amos 5:14`.

IT IS safe to say that everybody is seeking good, and not evil. Everybody is seeking pleasure, and not misery--happiness, and not woe. The difficulty is that all of our judgments are more or less perverted. Some have greater wisdom than others; but there is none perfect, "none righteous, no, not one." All come short of the glorious standard which God has set. The difficulty is that we have all been born in sin and are all misshapen. Not only our bodies are imperfect, but likewise our brains are unbalanced--some one way, and some another. Consequently young men and maidens, looking forth from childhood and youth upon the problems of life, have various conceptions of happiness, pleasure, joy, and make various resolutions and endeavors respecting the filling of their cup with blessings--long life, riches, ease, honor, etc.

The teachers of our public schools and colleges have a most wonderful opportunity for influencing the course of humanity. We rejoice in the thought that the teachers of the world in general are striving nobly for the fulfilment of

gracious, benevolent ideals, and they are using their opportunities for the blessing and uplift of their pupils. And yet evidently many of them have but a slight appreciation of their great privileges. And some, of course, like the remainder of the world, are selfish, and think of their work from the standpoint of business--so much effort, so much pay.

Fain would we encourage the teachers of the world to look not entirely to the reward of the present, but especially to the still more important reward of the future. It is growingly the view of Bible students that our every act and word, yea, and our very thoughts, our motives, have to do not only with our present experiences, but also with our future life--secured for all through the redemption Sacrifice at Calvary.

Of course, the first and chief responsibility for children rests upon their parents. And no doubt the majority of parents, to some extent, realize their responsibility in God's sight and man's, for the children they bring into the world. But they labor under the difficulties of their own ignorance. They knew not the proper course to take in life themselves. Their lives have been a succession of blunders--some more, some less, serious. They presume that their children must blunder similarly, and that success will be largely a matter of luck. Not seeing the principles underlying life's experiences, they are unable to guide their children intelligently. Here teachers, moralists, religionists and humanitarians, find their opportunity. But how little anyone seems able to accomplish along any line! And how discouraged the philanthropic become!

On the whole, however, a broad view, contrasting the present time with fifty years ago, shows that progress is being made in many directions. Our cities are cleaner-- both physically and morally--so far, at least, as outward appearance and standards are concerned. However shocked and shamed we may be at occasional disclosures of corruption and vice, those whose memories go back

half a century can tell that no longer do we have the vile "doggeries" of old, with poor sots sitting, lying, in various degrees of intoxication inside and outside the premise.

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No longer does vice flaunt itself in the face of society. The battle against intoxication and the social evil is making progress in that, at least, it has made former conditions impossible.

In some States the progress has been more than in others. The "doggeries" have been transferred into gilded palaces. The sot is disdained, even by the man who contributes to his fall by tempting his appetite beyond the power of his will.

NEW ISSUES NOW--NEW TEMPTATIONS

Our lesson tells of a time in the history of Israel when the prosperous class had become wealthy--when many of the nation's wisest and most brilliant people had settled down to ease and luxury--to self-gratification. They considered that they had won in the battle of life, and would now take their ease and enjoy the fruits of their strife and diligence. They would let the other fellow do the worrying for awhile, and they would live on Easy Street.

The Lord through the Prophet upbraided them, assuring them that He was not pleased with such a course. He tells them that woes are to be expected as a result. It was made the mission of Amos to call attention to the fact that aggressive selfishness had accumulated great riches, that the wealthy were living in great luxury, and that these conditions fostered pride and moral laxity amongst the wealthy; while the poor were being filled with avarice, losing respect for God and religion, for truth and mercy, and the desire for further

knowledge of God. Society was on the edge of a great volcano, and God declared that an eruption was near at hand. Amos was His mouthpiece. Today's lesson is a part of the Message he delivered.

PRESENT DAY CONDITIONS CORRESPOND

Our lesson is not inappropriate to our times. Notwithstanding the progress that has been made in many good lines, and notwithstanding the philanthropic sentiments of many, inside and outside the Christian denominations, nevertheless there is danger. First of all, let us consider the danger of the rich. The wealth of our day to a certain extent reaches to the very humblest and scatters blessings to all.

But the bulk of the world's wealth is in the hands of the few. The inordinately rich are in great danger of injuring themselves. Some of these cannot devise ways and means by which to consume even their incomes. Luxuries of every kind are tasted in the hope of finding rest, happiness, joy, peace. Not finding these, mankind still pursue them, seeking new avenues to happiness. Wealth brings increased opportunity for sin in its various forms, including debauchery.

The influence upon the poor is notable. The latter, seeking pleasure, imagine erroneously that the rich and indolent are finding it, while they themselves are seeking in vain. Thus the poorer, surrounded by the wonderful blessings of our day, are often miserable, because their minds are discontented. They want happiness, joy, pleasure, and believe they can obtain these only through wealth. The result is that their hearts are filling with anger and malice, and jealousy of the rich. The way is thus paved for most evil and atrocious conditions, and many are fully persuaded that our present favorable social conditions are maintained only through police and military power, backed by all the assistance of modern times --the telegraph, telephones, etc.

"WARN THEM THAT ARE RICH"

These words of the Apostle never were more in season than now. Those trusting in the uncertainty of riches need to arouse themselves. They need to learn the lesson

that the pleasure they seek lies not in the direction of their indulgence of self, but rather in self-sacrifice--in the service of others. Indeed this is the great lesson for all to learn--both rich and poor. While millions are seeking for joy, pleasure, only a remarkably few have found them. Those few are God's saintly people--whether Catholics or Protestants.

The secret of their success in finding what others are still seeking for lies in the fact that they have been Heaven-directed, and that they have followed the guidance of God's Word. And the more fully they have heeded His instructions, the greater has been their blessing. God's Message to all is, Seek first God's righteousness, God's will, the Divine Rule or Kingdom. Father Adam rebelled against the Divine will, and by breaking his covenant precipitated upon himself an avalanche of imperfection and death, which has since remained on the world--the reign of sin and death.

God's Word reveals that in due time He will roll away the curse, and bring blessings and opportunities to every member of our race. But meantime He would gather out a special class for a special purpose--the Church of the First-borns, whose names are written in Heaven. (`Heb. 12:23`.) These are to be highly exalted and to be used of the Almighty with the Savior Jesus in the great work of blessing the whole world. These are the Seed of Abraham, the Body of

The Messiah, of which Jesus is the Head.--`Galatians 3:16-29`.

The greatest privilege of the present time is to get into this elect company of God's saints. In order to enter this company, faith and obedience are necessary requisites. That faith must recognize Jesus as the Lamb of God, the Sin-bearer. It must recognize Him also as the Pattern and Exemplar. The reward will be to those who have His spirit, His disposition, and who will walk through the present life in His footsteps. Such will eventually gain with Him glory, honor, immortality--the Kingdom.

In the present time, they will to the world seem to have the unfavorable side, a battle against the world, the flesh and the Adversary. The world cannot understand what pleasure and blessing these really enjoy because of the surrender of their wills to God's will, and because of the Spirit of the Lord, which they consequently receive. But these alone have the peace and joy and blessing which the world can neither give nor take away. What other men are seeking and failing to find, God's saints enjoy.

"Peace is theirs which knows no measure,
Joys which through all time abide."

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THE VICTORIES OF FAITH

--JUNE 29.--`ACTS 7:9-16`; `HEB. 11:20-22`.--

"This is the victory that overcometh

the world, even our faith."--`1 John 5:4`.

WE ARE living in a day when faith is greatly discounted--in a day when people seem disposed to say, "I care not what a man believes, if only his life be honorable." And by this generally is meant that faith is of no consequence. Those who so hold usually put honor of men as the highest goal. Their sentiments, translated into plain English, would be, "With all your getting, get money and prosperity; for without these, no matter what you believe, or whom you worship, you will never prosper in the present life, success in which is the only goal now recognized by an increasing number."

The Bible standpoint, however, is the very reverse of this. God's Word puts faith first, and builds character upon that faith. God declares that no human being can do perfect works. Hence He has not made works the standard. Faith is God's standard, and He assures us that whoever has the proper faith must of necessity have works which will correspond to his faith. In line with this principle, we note that God's favorites of the Bible have all been men of faith. Their faith did not make them perfect, nor were their works always acceptable in God's sight, but He punished them for evil works and rewarded them for their great faith.

Thus we find in the Bible record that some of God's favorites committed grievous sins and made serious mistakes, and still, for all that, maintained themselves in God's favor, by reason of their faith.

GOD LOVES NOT THE WICKED

Of all religious books ever written or ever read, the Bible is perhaps the most candid. It tells of the mistakes and the sins of the very characters which it holds

up as models and examples of men after God's own heart. Yet the Bible leaves no room for any one to assume that God loves wickedness, or that the friends of God are the depraved of mankind. Quite to the contrary, the highest possible standards of righteousness, in word, in deed and in thought, are inculcated, and we are distinctly told that full acceptance with God can be only along the lines of truth and righteousness.

God tells us that we and all mankind are by nature sinners. He tells us that we could do nothing to clear away our own guilt and the sentence that stands against us as members of the fallen race. But He also tells us that He purposes to adjust that matter for us satisfactorily; and hence that our responsibility is not for what we cannot avoid, but for what we can avoid--not for what we cannot do, but for what we can do. He tells us that the foundation of all our noblest endeavors will lie along the lines of confidence in Him. This confidence He calls **faith.** He assures us that without faith it is impossible to please Him, and He has shown us this in all the lessons of the Bible.

FAITH IS NOT CREDULITY

Many make the mistake of supposing that faith is credulity. Under this delusion they are ready to swallow any and everything of a religious kind, if they are told

that God says so. But this is not the faith which the Bible encourages. On the contrary, the Bible would have us know definitely the things that God has promised, and exercise a definite faith in those things and give no heed whatever to the seductive vagaries of Satan, of our fellow men, or of our own imagination.

It is not for us to quarrel with those who take a different view of matters and who in the name of faith bind their followers with ignorance and superstition, and seek to prevent them from using their reasoning faculties. It is for us to address those who are feeling after God if haply they might find Him--those who are not content with superstitions, but whose hearts and minds cry out after the living God and His definite Word, His solemn statement of His will respecting us, and of His Plan, and of the part which we may have therein. So Jesus and the Apostles attempted not to teach everybody, but merely those who hungered and thirsted after righteousness. In the language of Jesus, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear."

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THE FAITH BEFORE CHRIST CAME

Let us look into the past, and note the method by which God has all along sought His peculiar people. The first proclamation of God's purposes respecting our race was made to Abraham. God spake to Abraham, saying, "Walk as in My presence, and be thou perfect"--**i. e.,** Do your best to be perfect. After Abraham had manifested some faith, God gave him further tests. When in obedience to those tests Abraham left his native land to live in Canaan, he manifested so great a faith that God called him His friend, and made to him the very first revelation of the Divine purposes in respect to humanity.

Abraham knew that there was a curse upon the race, under which the whole creation was groaning, going down to the tomb, and God's declaration to him was that the time would come when, instead of the curse, He would send a blessing. This meant to Abraham that, instead men becoming more imperfect

and wasting away in death, a change would come, by which they would be rescued from the dying condition, and resurrected from the power of the tomb.

This was a wonderful proposition, even for God to make; yet Abraham, with childlike faith, believed the Message. God declared to him that, because of his own faith, He would greatly bless him and his posterity, so that through him as a father eventually would come children who would accomplish the great work of blessing mankind, and would rescue all from the power of sin, Satan and death. The briefly epitomized statement of all this was in the words, "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."--`Genesis 28:14`.

What was it to have faith in that Promise? What did it mean to Abraham? Assuredly it meant that thenceforth Abraham's mind would take in a larger horizon-- the world of humanity, instead of merely his own immediate family and flocks and herds, and his nearest neighbors. It meant that if God would so honor his posterity, Abraham would seek in everything to co-operate with God and that great Promise.

For years God tested Abraham's faith. Yet he still believed. "His faith staggered not." After Isaac had been born and as yet had no child, God directed that this son of promise, the one in whom the whole Promise centered, should be sacrificed. What a test of faith! What a grand development of faith Abraham had acquired when he was ready to obey the Voice Divine, accounting that God was able to raise Isaac up again from the dead! Oh, for such a trust in God! Oh, for such a faith! Oh, for such an appreciation of Divine Power! What could not be accomplished in the world through the Divine Message if such faith prevailed amongst God's children! What would God not do for children who would trust Him thus!

It was the same with Isaac and with Jacob. They trusted that same Promise. It

influenced the whole course of their lives. It made them more like God. It shaped every interest of life. Although they understood practically nothing of how God would accomplish so great a blessing, their faith laid hold upon the fact. From their posterity God would raise up a holy people to be His agency, His channel, for instructing the world, ruling the world, uplifting the world, resurrecting the dead, bringing mankind back to all that was lost through Adam's disobedience.

Their faith might have had plenty of opportunities for stumbling, if it had been weaker. If they had been more worldly-wise, they might have said, How can God do this thing and yet be just? Having once pronounced a sentence, how can He clear the guilty? But their faith wavered not. In their hearts they said, "God has promised; and what God has promised, He will do, and He will have His own way of accomplishing it."

By and by, the nation of Israel as a whole was called the people of God. The nation as a whole entered into a Covenant with God, and He with them, through Moses, the mediator of the Law Covenant. Israel was impulsed by faith--faith in the Promise made to Abraham that God would use his posterity and through it bless all people, all of Adam's race--the living and the dead.

The Covenant of Sinai pledged the people of Israel that they would be a holy nation, that they would keep God's Law blamelessly. God covenanted that in that event He would fulfil in them the Promise made to Abraham. God knew that imperfect human beings could not keep His perfect Law. But He would let them try; He would let them learn the lesson; He would through that lesson give instruction to the angels respecting His own righteousness. He would also through it give instruction to Spiritual Israel, whom later He would develop and through whom the blessings actually would come. This St. Paul explains, saying, "The Law Covenant was added because of transgressions, until the

promised Seed should come."--`Galatians 3:19`.

In other words, God started this work with Israel, in a typical manner, long centuries before the real Spiritual Israel would be developed. But He did not thereby do injury to the people who had covenanted to keep the Law, but who were unable to do so. On the contrary, they as a people were blessed by their endeavors to keep that Law, and blessed also by the chastisements which came upon them because of their failures and lack of faith.

But God especially blessed all of that people who shared Abraham's faith, so that the Apostle Paul could enumerate, in addition to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, a considerable number who pleased God because of their faith, long centuries before Christ, the Spiritual Seed of Abraham came. Those Ancient Worthies, although they will not be the Seed of Abraham in the highest sense, on the spirit plane, will be the seed of blessing on the earthly plane--the channel through which the heavenly blessings will ultimately be extended to all nations.

What was it that impulsed the Jewish people during all those centuries past? Was it not faith in God--faith that He would fulfil the Promise made to Abraham? It surely was! And it is that Promise that still actuates such of the Jews as have not lost their faith--such of them as are still Jews. Those who have lost the faith of Abraham are no longer in any sense of the word related to the Promise; for the Promise was according to faith.

St. Paul speaks sympathetically of the Jewish nation, in respect to that original Promise which God made to them, saying: "Unto which Promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come." (`Acts 26:7`.) And all the Jews, in proportion as they still maintain that hope, may still expect to come to a realization of all and more than they ever dreamed of.

FAITH SINCE CHRIST CAME

The coming of Christ did not change the Divine Purpose, and therefore did not change the faith of God's people. Jesus and the Apostles believed and taught the very Gospel which, St. Paul says, God preached in the beginning to Abraham. (`Galations 3:8`.) The Apostolic Message also was that all the families of the earth were to be blessed through the Seed of Abraham. But there was an additional feature then to be proclaimed and to be believed; viz., that God had begun the work of providing this Seed of Abraham, The Messiah--that God had sent the Logos, His Son, into the world, that He

might become the Seed of Abraham on the spirit plane, and eventually fulfil every feature of the original Promise.

All the Jews were in expectation of the Messiah, but they were not all Israelites indeed; they did not all have the proper faith. God preferred, therefore, to allow some of them to remain in a measure of blindness on the subject, while others were granted a special anointing of the eyes of their understanding, their eyes of faith. To this class Jesus said, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God"--the Messianic Kingdom, through which the Seed of Abraham is to bless all the families of the earth.

Then came another step of faith. The early disciples said: We desire to believe that Jesus, the Son of God, is the foretold Seed of Abraham, but we do not see Him doing the work of blessing the world. Instead of reigning in triumph to dispense to the world the blessings secured by His sacrifice, He has gone to Heaven. How shall we understand this?

THE MYSTERY--CHRIST IN YOU

The answer of God through the Apostles was that "the faith once delivered to the saints" was still the same, but that now, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they were to understand that The Messiah would not be one person, but many persons--not Jesus alone would be the Seed of Abraham, but Jesus as the Head and the Church

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as His members, or Body, would be that Seed. St. Paul says, "Ye, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of Promise." Jesus was represented by the head of Isaac, the Church was represented by the body of Isaac, in that figure. It has taken the entire Gospel Age to develop the Body of Christ, the Church.

Under another figure, Jesus was represented in Isaac, and the Church was represented in Rebecca, his bride. According to this figure, the antitypical Isaac has entered into glory, but waits for the development of the antitypical Rebecca. At the appointed and appropriate time He will come, the Seed of Abraham, and receive His Bride to Himself, and they twain will be one. And through the One, through the Kingdom of Glory, will come to all the families of the earth the blessing promised nearly four thousand years ago to Abraham.

This is "the faith once delivered to the saints," the hope set before us in the Gospel--the faith that God will use the Seed of Abraham to bless all humanity, and the hope that we by faithful perseverance and trust may become joint-heirs with Jesus, the Redeemer, in all that glorious inheritance of the Messianic Kingdom.

Let us not doubt the Wisdom of God in the arrangement which He has made, and which He has caused to be set forth in the Scriptures; viz., that this faith, based upon the Abrahamic Promise, is the Power of God by which it is His will that all His people shall be sanctified-- separated so far as possible from the world and from sin; sanctified to Himself in Christ Jesus, their Lord. This is "the faith once delivered to the saints." This is the faith which enables us to gain the victory over the spirit of the world, and to be separate, sanctified to God, for service here and hereafter.

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INTERESTING QUESTIONS

MORE ABOUT HIGHWAY OF HOLINESS

Question.--Will any one be forced, or **compelled,** to walk up the Highway of Holiness?

Answer.--At present there is no Highway of Holiness; consequently no one is walking on it during the Gospel Age. There will be no such Highway until the Great King takes control of affairs, overthrows the present order of things and sets up the Kingdom of Heaven. Then a Highway of Holiness will be prepared, upon which the righteous can walk. During the Gospel Age there are but two ways--the Narrow Way and the Broad Way. (`Matt. 7:13,14`.) The former is for those who desire to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, and is a steep, rugged path. The latter is the road that leads to destruction and is a broad way on which the human race are hurrying to the tomb.

Those who walk **acceptably** in the footsteps of the Master must do so willingly. Theirs must be a **voluntary devotion.** To be **forced** is **not at all** the thought. The Little Flock will thus run the Narrow Way; but the Great Company will have experiences which will **force** them, not to take one special way, but to **decide for themselves,** what course they will pursue. There is a difference between **forcing** a man to go aboard a vessel, and bringing certain influences to bear which will cause him to **desire** to do so.

In the next Age, when the world's Highway of Holiness shall have been opened up (`Isa. 35:8`), **force** will be used to bring all mankind to a **knowledge of the Truth** respecting God's provision for them. Wrong doing will then be punished with corrective stripes. But it would be far from right to suppose that mankind will be driven or **forced along** the Highway of Holiness. All who **go up** thereon must **exert themselves;** for it will be an **upward** way. Our Savior stated the Father's sentiment respecting all to whom He will ever grant everlasting life. His words were, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

"PERFECT LOVE CASTETH OUT FEAR"

Question.--What kind of fear is referred to in the text, "There is no **fear** in love, but perfect love casteth out **fear."**--`I John 4:18`.

Answer.--Fear is a mental condition which is begotten of uncertainty. There are some things which we ought to fear, and some which we need not fear. The Adversary seems to take advantage of the fallen condition of the race, and to cause them to fear God; for it is natural to avoid whomsoever we fear. Mankind

realize instinctively that they are sinners by nature and that there is a penalty for sin. Taking advantage of this fear of the consequences of sin, the Adversary tries to instill in them a dread of God. He pictures before their imperfect minds a God who is unjust, over-severe in His dealings with sin and the sinner, for whom He has prepared a place of everlasting torture.

As we gradually come to a clear knowledge of God and of the principles by which He regulates the universe, we lose this improper fear; and in its stead comes a love for God and a realization that He has love for us. Our love for Him grows in proportion as we perceive that He loves mankind, and has made provision for them whereby they may have an opportunity for everlasting life. After we have come to love Him perfectly, all fear in the sense of dread is cast out.

Our knowledge and love should not, however, cast out the fear of displeasing God; for **proper fear** (reverence) must never be cast out. The more we have of reverential love, the more of the proper fear we shall have. Who would not fear to offend a brother or a neighbor whom he loved and appreciated? Much more should we dread offending our just, wise, loving God.

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The principle that "perfect love casteth out fear" should operate between husband and wife, between parents and children. The wife who fears her husband cannot be as happy as she would be if there were perfect love; and so also children who are in dread of either, or both, of their parents cannot love them with true filial affection. Each should fear to wound or offend the other, and should strive to have that perfect love which God is pleased to have all of His intelligent creatures exercise.

RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT AND CRITICISM

Question.--How may we distinguish between **"righteous judgment"** and **criticism?**

Answer.--The Lord says, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." (`John 7:24`.) St. Paul says, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come." (`I Cor. 4:5`.) The question then arises, What is "righteous judgment"? A righteous judgment is a **right decision.** But since we cannot read the heart, how can we render a right decision? The Scriptures answer that we cannot read one another's hearts and therefore should not **attempt** to **judge them.**

If, then, we cannot judge each other's hearts, motives or intentions, what can we judge? The answer of Scripture is that we may judge each other's **conduct.** If we see one of the Lord's people doing something improper, we might say, "Dear Brother (or Sister), your conduct would seem to be contrary to the Word of God, and to be bringing forth bad fruitage." If that person should reply, "It does not seem to **me** that I am doing wrong," we must not judge or condemn that one's heart. But we should judge between good and evil conduct, and at the proper time and place call attention to the matter and leave it there.

There is a difference between judging the **heart,** which we have **no right** to do, and judging the **conduct,** which is **right** to do. But it does not always follow that our judgment of another's conduct must always be right. We are all prone to make mistakes.

If we should come to a brother and say, "Dear Brother, your conduct seems to

be wrong, but I am sure that you want to do right. Will you explain?" He may be able to show us that the fruitage was good when we thought it bad. We may have misunderstood the matter. We are not to condemn our brother, but to go directly to him and get his view. Then if we cannot agree, we should tell him how it seems to us, and ask him to judge his own heart. We can do no more.

SETTING MEMBERS IN THE BODY

Question.--What is signified by God's "setting the members every one of them in the Body, as it hath pleased Him"?--`I Corinthians 12:18`.

Answer.--In the present time there is a Church of Christ on probation. We sometimes say that we are members of the Church Militant; but to be a member of the Church Militant will not prove that we shall be in the Church Triumphant. Only those who are "faithful unto **death"** will be in the Church Triumphant. St. Paul, whom God had set in a very high position in the Church feared lest he might become a castaway. He said, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (`I Cor. 9:27`.) Various privileges and opportunities are granted to us while in the flesh, and our acceptance in the end and our participation in the glory beyond will depend upon our faithfulness here.

The Apostle says that the various members, "fitly framed together, grow into an holy Temple in the Lord." (`Eph. 2:21`.) We may not use this figure too literally or we may get into confusion. The stones in the Temple differ to some extent one from the other. In what is called "random range work" building there are places for little stones and places for larger stones. This might, in some

respects, represent our being a larger or a smaller stone in the Temple--representing the privileges or honor which we may have beyond the veil.

St. Paul also says that he was trying to do much more, that he was trying to have a larger share in the trials and self-denials, in order that he might have a larger share in the work beyond. This did not mean that he desired self-aggrandizement, or that he was either **proud** or **self-seeking.** And **we** shall not be so if we would attain that to which God would have us attain--the glorious character-likeness of our Master.

"JERUSALEM...MOTHER OF US ALL"

Question.--In the text, "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" (`Galations 4:26`), who are meant by "us," and how is the spiritual Jerusalem the "mother of us all"?

Answer.--The Apostle here uses a figure of speech which is common in the Scriptures, and in which a city is referred to as the mother of its inhabitants; for instance, "daughters of Jerusalem," "daughters of Zion," "Sodom and her daughters," etc. The "us" class mean the saints of God. The citizenship of the saints is in Heaven--in the Heavenly Jerusalem, which will not be built until the First Resurrection. By faith we look forward and speak of that promised condition and of our citizenship therein.

The Church is developed under the same Covenant-Mother as was Christ; for

we are His members. His was a covenant of sacrifice. "Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by **sacrifice."** (`Psa. 50:5`.) The Man Christ Jesus entered into a covenant with the Father, which meant the sacrifice of His **flesh,** His **earthly nature.** As a reward for this sacrifice, the Father made Him a New Creature of the Divine nature--"far above angels," constituting Him the Great Messiah who shall bless the world.

Carrying out the Father's Plan, our Lord imputes His merit to such as now follow His example, and walk in His footsteps, performing the same covenant of sacrifice. If these are faithful, they will share in the great work of Messiah in blessing the world, and will constitute the New Jerusalem, the Millennial Kingdom. By faith we are **its children.** Even now, our citizenship is in Heaven.

BROAD UNSECTARIAN QUESTIONS

The following are the questions usually put by Brother Russell when receiving candidates for Water Immersion. It will be noticed that they are on broad lines--questions which any Christian, whatever his confession, should be able to answer in the affirmative without hesitation if he is suitable to be acknowledged as a member of the Church of Christ:

(1) Have you repented of sin with such restitution as you are able, and are you trusting in the merit of Christ's sacrifice for the forgiveness of your sins and the basis of your justification?

(2) Have you made a full consecration of yourself with all the powers that you possess--talent, money, time, influence--all to the Lord, to be used faithfully in His service, even unto death?

(3) On the basis of these confessions, we acknowledge you as a member of the Household of Faith, and give to you as such the right hand of fellowship, not in the name of any sect or party or creed, but in the name of the Redeemer, our glorified Lord, and His faithful followers.